

TRINITY CHARGE--THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
Ralph C. Link, Pastor
Christ Church, Duncannon 9:00 A.M.
Trinity Church, New Bloomfield 10:30 A.M.

THE ORDER OF WORSHIP August 6, 1972

The Organ Prelude
*The Hymn of Praise 4
*The Call to Worship
*The Prayer of Confession (Unison)
O Lord, we recognize that we have been
created by thee, but we have fallen away
from the good intent of thy creation.
Restore again thy image within us that we
may know what it means to be thy children.
We confess that we have not been obedient
disciples. Cause us to hear again thy call
and follow thee. We acknowledge that we
have loved ourselves too much and our brother
too little. Help us to hear and live thy
commandment that we should love thee with
heart, mind, and soul, and our neighbor as
ourselves. Forgive us, O Lord, and help us
to find our peace in thee; through Christ
our Lord. Amen.
*The Kyrie
*The Assurance of Pardon
The Scripture----II Peter 1
*The Gloria Patri
The Pastoral Prayer
The Announcements
The Receiving of Tithes and Offerings
*The Doxology
*The Offering Prayer and Lord's Prayer
The Hymn of Meditation 275
The Sermon----"More Of The Same!"
The Sermon Prayer
*The Hymn of Response 318
*The Benediction
*The Threefold Amen
*The Postlude

GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Wednesday evening at 7:30 P.M. has been set
as the time when the evangelism training
sessions will be held. The meetings will
alternate between the churches and the
meeting this week will be held in Duncannon.

Bottles and glass will be collected at the
food mill next to Tressler's Station in
New Bloomfield on Sat. August 12th from
9:00 A.M. to 12:00 P.M.

Tonight at 7:30 P.M. Rev. Larry Hammer will
be installed as the pastor of the Mansville-
New Bloomfield Lutheran Charge. You are all
cordially invited.

CHRIST CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

The consistory will meet Monday Aug. 7th
at 7:30 P.M.

Your prayers, concerns and well wishes are
requested for:

Linda Achenbach----Polyclinic Hospital
Richard Fox----Harrisburg Hospital
John McCoy----Harrisburg Hospital

"More Of The Same"

II PETER

Text: II Peter 1:12,13,20b,21 "Therefore I intend always to remind you of these things, though you know them and are established in the truth you have. I think it right, as long as I am in this body, to arouse you by way of reminder. No prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, because no prophecy ever came by the impulse of man, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God."

A small boy's mother, after a rowk battle had ensued between he and another boy, remarked, "When the other boy started throwing stones at you, why didn't you come to me instead of throwing them back at him.?" To which the boy answered, "what good would it do to yell you? You couldn't hit the side of a garage."

Now this is the same story I heard as a boy, except the word barn was used in place of garage. Things must be kept up to date, and merely changing a word does this, but basically it is the same old story over, and over again.

This is what Peter was telling those to whom he wrote when he said, "Therefore I intend always to remind you of these things, though you know them and are established in the truth you have. I think it right as long as I am in this body, to arouse you by way of reminder." He was telling them, "I am giving you more of the same, and I will continue to do so since this is what you need. This is the food that is required for your soul. This is the message that has been laid upon me by Almighty God. So listen, and listen again, because it will always be the same old story, and more of the same as long as I am able to preach and as long as God gives me life and breath."

The late Franklin Roosevelt in one of his speeches against war used the phrase, "I must tell you again and again and again, ~~and~~ ~~hate war~~." This is what we must all do and that is to not only hear the message of God again and again and again, but to tell it again and again and again. The story may be old, and may be time worn. The phrases may be well used, but the message is still the same, "Man was mired in his sin, and God came to earth in the form of a man, and ~~the~~ ~~light~~

^{THAT} ~~death~~ this man ~~married~~ ^{MANKIND} ~~has~~ been freed from their sins, because he took our sins upon himself and suffered and died on the cross in our place. And He is now risen from the dead, thus conquering once and for all man's last mortal enemy, death, and because He lives, we too can live eternally with our Father.

This is basically the message that is ever new, though dated, and ever fresh though stale in years, and this is the message we each need to have in our lives. At this past weeks meeting of members of both churches, someone raised the question that instead of going out to seek new people for our churches, perhaps we would be wise to concentrate on the present members to motivate them. My answer was and is that I can preach this same message that I have just related until I cannot speak anymore, and if that message does not fall upon hearing ears, and if that message does not burn within their hearts, and if that message doesn't ~~want them to have this~~ move them to come to Jesus and accept Him personally, then what will?

I shared this illustration with the group last Wednesday evening and I would ask them to please bear with us, because this needs repeating.

(Illustration of "Not tonight.")

This is a sad commentary of life, that too often we put off until tomorrow, and too often tomorrow never comes. And there is one other sad note about this, and it is the fact that there are many church members who are regular worshipping members, who have never come to the place where they have made a personal acceptance of Jesus Christ. But here again, it is not completely their fault, since too many times this commitment has been played down, and the role of just coming to church and giving regularly has been played up. But my friends it takes more than that to be a true follower of our Master, It requires that you and I individually, come to Him, acknowledging that

we are sinners, and asking Him to take our sins upon Himself, and then asking that He live in and through us.

But there is one other thing Peter is saying to these people that is equally ~~as~~ important, and must not be overlooked. He said, "No prophecy of scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, because no prophecy ever came by the impulse of man, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God." He is in effect saying, that it is only by the Holy Spirit sent from God, spoken through people that is true prophecy.

There was a man named Girolamo Savonarola who lived in Italy in the 1400's. One of ~~his~~ ^{THE} exploits attributed to him ~~is to~~ ^{WAS THAT HE} attend ~~to~~ Lorenzo de Medici of Florence when he was dying. He asked Savonarola to hear his confession and grant him absolution. As he stood by the bedside of this dying tyrant he said, "God is great, ~~and~~ God is good, and God is merciful, but for His forgiveness, three things are necessary on your part." "What are they," Lorenzo asked? "First you must have a lively faith in Jesus Christ, as your Saviour, and you must believe in the mercy of God. Then you must restore all of you ill-gotten wealth or charge your sons to restore it in your name." "I have that belief and faith, and I will arrange for my sons to make restitution for me," he said. "And finally you must restore the liberties of the people of Florence." At this Lorenzo became furious, and with eyes flashing anger he turned his face to the wall in refusal, as though to say, "Sooner Hell, than that."

But as history has shown, it is what Savonarola said that was prophecy, and what he did afterward proved it. He was able to take over the reigns of government and by his trying to instill religion and moral values in a heathen society, he was able to bring Florence to a state of almost ^{COMPLETE} puritanism. But he was unable to cope with all of the abuse and ridicule and attacks that came his way. ^{Even the Pope, SAVONAROLA} Pope Alexander the VI was one of his chief attackers. ~~He~~ was ex-communicated

in 1497. He in turn tried to have the Pope deposed, but was unsuccessful. He was arrested, tried for heresy, tortured and hung, and then his body was burned.

Now here is an extreme example of an individual who was representing the prophecy of scripture, but not as a private interpretation. There is a danger in trying to make religion say what you want it to say. Christianity in too many areas has been reduced to a system of ethics. It is this, but it is more. We can see it being made to say and to suit any given situation, we want it to suit.

We can see hypocrisy by church members condoned in many churches and ~~the church~~ ^{BEING} condoned ~~in~~ ⁱⁿ the name of Christ. We can see churches becoming private little Jesus Christ clubs, where you are only welcome if you are a member of a certain family, or you can meet a certain standard. We can see the church in many areas involved in so many other things, except the business of interpreting the word of God fearlessly, and seeking His stamp of approval on its entire operation. The question to be asked of any endeavor or venture of any church should be, "Is this being done ~~in~~ ^{AND SCRUTINIZED} with the express intent and purpose to further Christianity, or is it being done to merely serve the selfish interests of that particular congregation? I am afraid that in many areas, programs would be scrapped if placed up to the light and held ~~in~~ ^{up} for this inspection.

Peter's message was first, the life and death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. He told this fearlessly and boldly to ~~any~~ and all people. He told of his life with this Jesus ~~and~~ the things he did and said. Then secondly his message was one of trying as much as possible to speak what God wanted him to say. To try not to rely on his own wisdom and knowledge, but to let God speak through him.

These are the two essentials of Christianity. If we then apply them to our individual lives, how do we shape up? ~~xxxxxx~~ Have we

personally accepted this Jesus Christ and are ^{we} striving to follow him in the church? Or are we instead, like many others, just nominal Christians. Merely names on the roll who attend for one reason or another?

Can we then say that we are seeking in our daily lives to show this Jesus, by the words we speak to those around us? By the way we live? Or do we let God only try to speak ~~through~~ through the preacher on Sunday, because that is his job, and I have ^{my job} ~~mine~~ and never the two shall meet?

Our lives should be different because of this Jesus Christ, and our lives should be different because God is guiding our mouths and our complete beings. It may be the same old message that we hear week after week, and perhaps dressed up in new and different language, but, as Peter said, "Therefore I intend always to remind you of these things." And we also must remind others of these things. It may be more of the same, but it will be always fresh and new if shared and shown with the love of God speaking through us.

Shirley & Ralph Charles Link, Nancy Link, Dale with Lianne his wife, Lloyd Link with Karen his wife
 Jessica in front of Ralph C. Link
 Ethan and Alisha in front of R. Dale and Lianne Link (the eldest son & family)









Ralph C. Link
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Born: April 9, 1929, Pittsburgh, Pa.
Married: December 15, 1951
Wife: Shirley Margaret Neill
Born: December 8, 1930, Pittsburgh, Pa.

Children: Ralph Dale Link, born May 11, 1955, Pittsburgh, Pa.
Lloyd Alan Link, born May 28, 1958, Pittsburgh, Pa.
Nancy Lynn Link, born March 15, 1961, Butler, Pa.

SCHOOLING:

Graduated from Perry High School, Pittsburgh, Pa.
June 1947

Lay Ministry School, Penn West Conference of United
Church of Christ, September 1965 to May 1969

Commissioned Lay Minister June 1969

Lancaster Theological Seminary, Lancaster, Pa.,
September 1970

Graduated from Lancaster Theological Seminary May 1974

Ordained to Christian Ministry March 10, 1974

PASTORATES:

As Lay Minister: short term, 1 month or less in
various churches 1965 to 1967

Emlenton Lamartine Charge of United Church of Christ
1967 to 1969

Short term in various churches 1970 until Seminary
entrance July 1970

July 1970 to December 1973 Student Pastor at Trinity
Charge, New Bloomfield, Duncannon, Pa., Penn Central
Conference, United Church of Christ

December 1973 to present, St. Paul's United Church of
Christ, Butler, Pa., Penn West Conference, United
Church of Christ

PERSONAL TESTIMONY

OF

Ralph C. Link

I am the youngest of five children. I was born just prior to the onset of the Depression. Our family was very poor. My father was an alcoholic and my mother was a very religious person who was searching for the Lord. During my childhood she did her best to teach me the things of the Lord. Later in life she came to a personal relationship with Him.

I grew up in the Evangelical and Reformed Church where salvation by grace alone was not preached nor taught. I knew all about Jesus, what He did, how He lived, His miracles, His death and resurrection, but I didn't know Him personally.

My life had many ups and downs and all the while I was attending church and striving with my good works to please God. At a very low point in my life when we were deeply in debt and my wife and three children were all ill, I came to the crossroads. I watched a Billy Graham Crusade on television from some distant city and the message he preached seemed to be directed right at me. I wrestled with making that commitment to Christ, but didn't. The next afternoon and evening at work on the 4 to 12 shift I came to the conclusion that I needed to make that commitment to Christ. It seemed like there was no other choice if life was to have any meaning. That night when I came home from work at 1:00 A.M., I laid face down on the living room floor and told God that I couldn't live my life in my own strength and I accepted the gift of salvation from my Savior Jesus Christ. My life has never been the same.

Through several meaningful circumstances I was called by God to serve Him in the Christian Ministry and to help spread that wonderful message of salvation through the shed blood of Jesus Christ. What a wonderful and rewarding time it has been and I give Him all the praise for my salvation and the opportunity to serve Him.

STATEMENT OF FAITH

OF

Ralph C. Link

I believe the Bible, both the Old and New Testaments to be the inspired inerrant Word of God. I believe the Bible is the complete revelation of His will for the salvation of men and it is the final authority for the Christian faith and life.

I believe in one God, who is eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

I believe in the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ that He is true God and true man. I believe that He was born of the Virgin Mary, that He lived in sinless life, that He performed the miracles recorded in Scripture, that He died on the cross as a sacrifice for our sins, that He bodily arose from the dead, that He ascended on high where He is at the right hand of Almighty God as our intercessor.

I believe in the Holy Spirit and that He comes and indwells each believer at the time of conversion. I believe that He lives in each believer to lead, to instruct, and to convict so that a believer may live a more godly life.

I believe that through the shed blood of Jesus Christ and through His resurrection, this is the only ground for justification and salvation for all who receive Him. A Lord and Savior and to such as receive Him, they are born of the Holy Spirit and become children of God.

I believe water baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances of the Church but are not means of salvation.

I believe in the personal and premillennial and imminent coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I believe in the resurrection of the dead, for the believer to resurrection of life and joy with the Lord, for the unbeliever to resurrection of judgement and everlasting punishment.